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May 24.

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THE
PLAUSIBLE
ARGUMENTS
OF A
Romish Priest
ANSWERED
BY AN
English Protestant.

Rev. Comber.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R.Clavell, at the Sign
of the Peacock in St.Pauls
Church-yard, 1686.

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TO THE READER.

IN the following Dialogue (though not All, yet) the most Material Points wherein the Roman Church differs from the Church of England, are briefly and plainly discoursed: So that while by their little Tracts and short Catechisms, daily Printed and sent abroad, the Romish Emis- faries do labour to Seduce the Weaker sort of Protestants, They may be pro- vided with short and satisfactory An- swers to their most usual Fallacies. Their Assaults are generally in the Dark, and because it is impossible al- ways to stand by those particular Per- sons whom they labour to Draw-in, it is

To the READER.

thought fit to publish this little Manual, to enable those that are Attacked readily to defend themselves: To which end the Holy Scripture is here recommended as the best Touch-Stone to justifie our Doctrines, and discover their Corruptions; And the more their Guilt makes them fly from it, the more our Sincerity should make us cleave to it. For this is in every Protestants Hand; and there are so many and so plain Places of it which condemn the Opinions and Practices of the Roman Church, that it requires no great Skill nor Art to discern how different they are from Gods Word; And all the Learning and Artifice of their greatest Doctors will not be able to hide it from a plain and honest Enquirer, that will take but the Pains to read this Divine, Unalterable, Universally received

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ceived, and Infallible Book of God.
I know they pretend (especially to the
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Authors, to leave that Province to the
Clergy of the Church of England,
who have hitherto always worshipped
them at that Weapon also. And since
we can prove both by Scripture and
Antiquity, That all their Additional
Articles of Faith are False and
Erroneous ; and yet they do acknow-
ledge all those Articles of Faith
which we hold as necessary to Sal-
vation, to be True : Doubtless, Ours
must be the safer Religion, in which
both Sides do agree. Again, The plain
Words of Holy Scripture prove Our
Religion ; but all those Points where-
in they differ from us, cannot be
proved but by pretended Traditions,
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To the READER.

some of which are expressly contrary
to Gods Written Word. The Scri-
pture was not made by us, but by the
GOD of Truth; and it is owned
not by us alone, but by them and all
Christians to be the Word and Will
of God, and this is clearly on Our
Side: But those Traditions which
they fly to for their Evidence, are of
their own Making, and in their own
Keeping; No other Christians do
allow them, and We have nothing but
their own Word in their own Cause,
to prove them to be Genuine: Which
being the Case, I hope none will ever
be perswaded to leave a certain, plain
and evident Religion of Gods own
prescribing, for an uncertain, obscure
and Ill-proved Religion, which is no
more but a meer Human Invention,
as the ensuing Pages will more fully
declare.

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN A Popish Priest, AND A PROTESTANT OF THE Church of *England.*

Popish Priest. **W**hat Religion are you of?

Protestant. Of the same that Christ and his Apostles taught, which is professed by the Church of *England*, whereof I am a Member.

Po. How do you know, that the Religion you profess is the same that was taught by Christ and his Apostles ?

Prot. By the Scriptures which they left behind them.

Po. How can you tell, whether they writ and left that Book behind them or no ?

Prot. The Book is worthy of such Authors, and all Christians (though they differ in other things) agree in this, nor dare you deny it.

Po. We do not deny it, only we say, you ought to confess you received this Book from the Roman Church, and must learn the meaning of it from her.

Prot. This Book hath been preserved in all Christian Churches; but we received it from those good Protestants who translated it into English; whereas your Priests (as I am informed) kept it in Latin, and withheld it from such plain Men as my self, while they had power here.

Po. Though they did so, it was only for fear you should wrest the Scripture to your own destruction, 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Prot. That danger is only in some places hard to be understood, and which I may safely be ignorant of: But in all things necessary to Salvation, it is so plain as to give understanding to the Simple, Psal. cxix. 130. Wherefore I rather think they concealed it all from us, to keep us from seeing their Errors; because

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because the more I read it, the less I like your Religion.

Po. Is it not a strange presumption in you (that are but a Lap-man) to read that which you cannot rightly understand?

Prot. It is no presumption to obey the Command of Christ, who bids us *Search the Scriptures*, *John v. 39.* and declaring the not knowing them to be the cause of Error, *Math. xxii. 29.* And the *Beræans* are commended for examining the Apostles Doctrine by Scripture, *Acts xvii. 11.* Now surely, if we have Commands and Examples of Reading the Scripture, it must be supposed we can in some measure understand it.

Po. Well, you read that Christ will be with his Church to the end of the World, *Math. xxviii. 20.* and therefore you ought to believe the Catholic Church can only give you the true sense of Scripture.

Prot. I do believe this, and am a Member of this Catholic Church, being rightly baptized into it, and holding the same Creeds which were anciently and universally believed in it; so that I am as likely to come to know the true sense of Scripture, as any others.

Po. Not so, by your favour, for you are no Member of the Roman Church, which I will prove to be that Catholic Church mentioned in the Creeds; and then it must follow that you neither have the true sense

of Scripture, noz can you be saved out of this Catholic Church.

Prot. I shall yield your Consequences when you prove the Antecedent ; but then you must not take it for granted without any Proof, as your Priests use to do.

Po. I do not think it needs much proof, for it is as visible as that the Scripture is in Print.

Prot. That cannot be , for no body doth or can deny this ; but the far greater part of Christians utterly deny the *Roman* Church to be the Catholic Church, yea, and say it is Non-sense to affirm a part to be the whole, or a particular to be universal : And it must be well proved from Scripture (which all Christians agree to be Gods Word) before I can be perswaded that Christ (who died for his whole Church) will suffer three parts of four of those which he redeemed, to be damned for not believing this Opinion, as you most uncharitably affirm.

Po. Well, soz your satisfaction I will undertake to prove, that S. Peter was the Chief of the Apostles ; and that Christ gave him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and built his Church on him as on a Rock ; and that the Bishop of Rome is S. Peters Successor, and Head of that Church which Christ promised to lead into all truth ; and then you must confess the Roman Church to be that Catholic Church

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Church which is mentioned in the Creeds;

Prot. I hope you will give me leave to hear and examine your Proofs; and on that condition pray proceed.

Po. Do not the Scriptures, naming S. Peter in the first place, shew he was the Chief of the Apostles?

Prot. This shews he was an Eminent Apostle, but cannot imply any Superiority over the rest, because Christ makes them all equal Judges sitting together upon twelve Thrones, *Math.* xix. 28. and forbids any of them to pretend any Superiority over the others; and though there was one Emperor then over many lesser and inferior Princes, Christ saith, *It shall not be so among his Apostles,* *Math.* xx. 26. *Luke* xxii. 26. Nor would S. James have finally determined in the Council of Jerusalem in S. Peters presence, *Acts* xv. 13. or S. Paul have so openly opposed and reproved him, if Christ had made him Superior over all the Apostles, *Galat.* ii. 11, 14.

Po. Do you not read, that Christ gave to him first and singly the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and promised to build his Church on him, as on a Rock, so firm, that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against it? *Math.* xvi. 18, 19.

Prot. I read, that Christ in that place of *Math.* xvi. 19. did not give, but only promise

to give him those Keys afterwards; which promise he made also to all the Apostles, *Math. xviii. 18.* and when he came to perform it, he gave the power of the Keys to them all alike, *John xx. 22, 23.* And it was upon S. Peters Confession of Faith that Christ built his Church, not upon his Person, since we see the Gates of Hell immediately prevailed against him, first in his labouring to tempt Christ not to suffer, *Math. xvi. 22.* and secondly, in his denying him with many Imprecations, *Math. xxvi. 24.* But if I should grant all the Priviledges you heap on S. Peter, without any good evidence from Gods Word, that will not prove the Popes sole right to them all.

Po. Yes, without doubt: for the Bishop of Rome is certainly the Successor of S. Peter, and consequently the Vicar of Christ, and suprem Head of the Catholic Church.

Prct. The Bishop of *Antioch* hath a better Title to be S. Peters Successor, because the Scripture (which never mentions his being at *Rome*) says expressly, he was there: but if the Bishop of *Rome* had been S. Peters Successor, that could not make him Head of the whole Catholic Church, because S. Peter himself never pretended to any such Power or Title; yea, he was peculiarly the Apostle of the believing *Jews*, who had been Circumcised, *Galat. ii. 7.* and to them he writes:

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Nor doth Christ anywhere tell us, he would leave one such Head on Earth, or give any Orders to all Christians to obey any one Apostle.

Po. But we do believe the Bishop of Rome to be S. Peters Successor, and if so, how can our Lord make good his Promise to be with his Church to the end of the World, if he do not make S. Peters Successor as infallible as S. Peter himself was by his presence and assistance?

Prst. If we grant an inspired Apostle to have been Infallible in order to settling the Faith, and writing the Rule of it, it doth not follow that his uninspired Successors should have this Priviledge, now the Faith and Rule of it are fixed. For then the Bishops of *Antioch*, *Jerusalem* and *Alexandria* must be Infallible now: And Christs Promise is not made to S. Peter, or to any particular Apostle, but to the whole Catholic Church; so that as long as the true Faith is held in any one or more Churches, Christs Promise is made good, though other particular Churches fall away.

Po. But the Catholic Church in the Creed is an Apostolical Church, and it was promised to the Apostles, that he would lead them into all truth, John xvi. 13. which Priviledge belongs to Rome, as being now the only free Apostolical Church in the World.

Prot. All Churches in the World at first were planted immediately, or mediately, by the Apostles; and Christ did certainly make this Promise good to his Apostles, who were led into all Truth; and so long as any particular Church keeps close to this Truth which the Apostles taught, the Promise is still made good to that Church; and there were many particular Apostolical Churches under Pagan Emperors, and may be now under the *Turks*; it being not temporal Freedom, but adhering to the Apostles Doctrine which makes a particular Church, Apostolical, and made the whole Catholic Church to be called so at first, when the Creed was made.

. *Po.* However, you must grant it is most prudent to take the best way to come to the knowledge of the Truth: Now it is both the easiest and certainest way for the People to come to this knowledge by believing as the Church believes.

Prot. It is neither so easie nor so certain a way, as to Search the Scriptures.

Po. This is a strange Assertion! Is it not easier to let your Pastors (who are fitted for it by their Profession) judge of matters of Faith, than for you to take pains to find them out in Scripture?

Prot. My Assertion is not so strange as true: For it is much more difficult for such a man as I am, to know what these Pastors

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Po. Have not Councils set this down; and is not the Pope always ready to declare the Churches true Sense?

Prot. But how can I know which are lawful Councils, or what they have determined? or if I did know the Words, and doubted of the Sense, it would be very hard for me to get the Pope to tell me in words or writing what it was; and if the Pope did this, he cannot speak or write plainer than God hath done in holy Scripture, and therefore (I am told) there is as much difference among you about the Sense of Councils and Popes, as there is among us about the Sense of Scripture.

Po. Well, but your own Catholic Bishop or Priest, can tell you the true meaning of both Councils and Popes in all these matters.

Prot. So can our Protestant Bishops and Priests tell us the true meaning of Scripture: But if you be forced to resort at last to particular fallible Men for the certainty of your Faith; why do you boast of a better way to be infallibly assured of the Truth, than Protestants can ever have, and upon that false ground urge Men to come over to your Church?

Po. Because we rely upon that Oral Tradition which hath been delivered down through

through all Ages in the Roman Church, and can never fail, so long as we have living Witnesses to declare it ; and is not this certainer than a dead written Rule, that may be interpreted as every man pleases ?

Prot. No sure, for all Men put things of greatest concern in Writing ; and do not trust things for Posterity, to be told by word of Mouth. A written Rule says always the same words, and can have no ends upon us : but your living Witnesses by forgetfulness, or to serve their Pride and Covetousness, may deliver Tradition variously : And you have no Evidence that those things are Apostolical Traditions, which your Church says are so ; but either ancient Writings , which are of far less credit than Scripture, (and then also you must suppose those ancient Writings to be more evident than your Traditions , because you prove these by them) or else you must trust to fallible Men, whose Interest it may be, and is, to deceive you ; and thus your present living Witnesses bear sole Testimony to themselves, which is very suspicious at the best : So that your way is neither certainer nor easier than ours.

Po. I know not what your way is, unless you make every private Man to be judge of Scripture ; when that declares, The People must enquire the Law from the Priests Mouth , *Malach. ii. 7.* And Commands

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mands us to obey them that are over us in the Lord, *Hebr. xiii. 17.* affirming ; that no Scripture is of any private Interpretation, *2 Pet. i. 20.*

Prot. Our way is to read diligently, and pray heartily to be directed; And if we doubt, then to go to our Protestant Bishops and Priests, (for they, and not your Clergy, are over us in the Lord) and they are as able, as willing, and of as great Integrity, as any among you, to give us Satisfaction. And though we do not pretend that every private Man may interpret difficult places, without the advice of his Pastor; Yet you are mistaken in your Interpretation of that Place of *S.Peter, 2 Pet.i.20.* Where the Apostle is proving the Scripture is a sure Rule, because it was not written or first Interpreted by any private Mans Will or Fancy, but the Authors spake by the Holy Ghost, and according to the Will of God : Which is nothing to your purpose.

Po. However it seems you are forced to rely on these Priests of yours, for the true meaning of Scripture, and the final certainty of your Faith, and yet you call this a slavish thing in Catholics.

Prot. Our Priests do not barely tell us, this Man to be or that is the Sense of Scripture, and then that declares, forbid us all further enquiry, which would law from the really be an enslaving of their People: But And Com: they compare one Scripture with another, and mands

and give us sound and solid reasons for all their Expositions, desiring us no further to believe them, than the clearness of their evidence deserves, and this allows us the freedom of rational Beings.

Po. But is it not contrary to Scripture and reason both, that the People should judge of their Pastors Proofs and Declarations?

Prot. It is not contrary to Scripture; for there all Christians are expressly commanded *To prove all things and hold fast that which is good.* *1 Thess. v. 21.* and *to try the Spirits.* *1 John iv. 1.* St. Paul bids the *Corinthians Judge what he said* *1 Cor. x. 15.* And likes those who tried his Declarations by the Scripture, *Acts xvii. 11.* So that no doubt God will expect Men shall have something more to say for that Faith on which they trust their Souls, than that their Priest barely affirmed that it was true.

Po. Is not the Priest judge of the People, and can it be reasonable then that they should be his Judges? *Deut. xvii. 9.*

Prot. We do not pretend to judge our Priests, but only to use our Reason, (which God gave us not in vain,) in judging merely for our selves; because we read that every Man shall bear his own burden, and therefore every man must prove his own Work, *Galat. vi. 4, 5.* and this gives us not any power over either our Priests or Fellow Christians; 'tis no judgment of direction for others, but only

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only a judgment of discretion, which to strip us of, is to degrade us into the rank of Brutes.

Po. Well, though you seem fond of your own way, yet even the good effects of our Method may convince any impartial Man it is better; for do you not see how quiet and unanimous we are, by our Peoples intire relpance on their Passions?

Prot. This may prove it a cunninger, but not a safer Method; The Turks are as unanimous as they are in your Church, but they may thank ignorance and severities for it: And for our parts we envy not their happiness, who have found out a way (not prescribed by Christ) to live peaceably in gross Errors, and to be unanimous in their Mistakes.

Po. I know you aim at our Church, and wonder how such a Man as you dare charge the Roman Church with gross Errors and Mistakes?

Prot. Because I can make my Charge good; For if Scripture be the Rule of what we ought to believe and practise, then your kneeling and praying before Images, your Invocation of Angels and Saints, adoring Relicks, praying in an unknown Tongue, Transubstantiation, Half Communion, Auricular Confession, Indulgences, and your Doctrine of Purgatory (with divers others which I can name) are gross errors and corruptions believed and practised in the Roman Church.

Po.

Po. You are very bold ! But I doubt not to justify all these opinions and practices, and to convince you so fully of the truth and innocence of them, that I hope you will own your mistake, and embraze these very things which you so rashly censure, therefore let us discourse the particulars.

Prot. I can never be perswaded to kneel down and pray before an Image, to offer up Incense and Gifts to it: Since I read in Scripture we must not bow down to them nor worship them, *Exod. xx. 4, 5.* and find Idolatry so grievously condemned there.

Po. I confess the Scripture condemns Idolatry, but sure you cannot be so weak to think we take the Image for our God, as Heathens did.

Prot. We cannot see your Thoughts; but you do all those acts before your Images, which Heathens did before theirs; and (I am told) they excused themselves as you do, by saying they did not take the Image for their God, yet all Christians count them flat Idolaters.

Po. They were so, because they worshipped Images of false Gods, but you must not say we are so, because ours are Images of the true God, and his Saints.

Prot. They broke the First Commandment in having other Gods, and you break the Second, which forbids the making any Image

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Image to worship it , not excepting the Image of the true God, or of things in Heaven; so that this only proves your Idolatry is of another kind; not that it is no Idolatry at all. The Jews were as real Idolaters for worshiping the Golden Calf , though they took it for a representation of the true God, *Exod.* xxxii. 4, 5. as when they worshiped *Baal-Peor*, *Numb.* xxv. 2.

Po. Well, but we do not terminate any of our worship on the Image, but on that which it represents; the Image only helps to raise up our minds to the thing which is signified by it , and our worship passes through the Image to that thing, which cannot be Idolatry.

Prot. If it be an Image of the Saints which are Creatures, it is Idolatry to ask any thing of them which is in Gods power to give, and so your worship in that case ends in flat Idolatry : And if it be an Image of God or Jesus Christ , that worship which you give their Images, and intend shall terminate on God, must be Divine worship. For otherwise you cannot worship God or Christ, by worshiping your Images.

Po. But suppose our Church finds this way of worship helps devotion, may she not command any mode of worship for so good an end ?

Prot. No, she cannot command any mode of worship forbidden in Scripture, upon no

pretence whatever: And surely Christ and his Apostles knew what would help devotion as well as your Church, but there is not in their Writings one word for this way of worshiping God, and there is a plain Commandment against it; and if you would confess truth, the Carving, Painting and Gilding of the Image, takes off your Thoughts from attending the matter of your Prayers, and so they hinder rather than help devotion.

Po. Is it any more Idolatry in our Church to command this, than in yours to enjoin you to bow at the Name of Jesus, and to bow to the Altar?

Prot. The Scripture expressly bids us bow at the Name of Jesus, *Phil.* ii. 10. But you cannot shew any thing for bowing to his Image: And we do not bow to the Altar, but toward it, that is, we only look that way, when we worship the true God, but have no visible representation of him before us when we do this: And besides, this Ceremony is left at liberty, so that none are bound to observe it.

Po. But do we not respect the Image of our Prince or our Friend, for the sake of those they represent, and ought not all Christians to respect the Images of Christ and his Saints for their sakes.

Prot. We do not talk to these Pictures of our Prince or Friend, nor make Petitions to them,

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them, this would look like madness: We do respect the Image of Christ, but that will not serve you, unless we fall down and worship it; but we must answer you, *We are to worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve.* Math. iv. 10.

Po. I confess we cannot expect you should pray before the Images of Saints and Angels till we have convinced you of your Error in not praying to Angels and Saints, so that I shall now go on to prove, that it is lawful to call upon Angels to help us, for did not Jacob do so? Gen. xlviij. 16.

Prot. Pray read the place, and you will find he prays only *to the Angel that redeemed him:* That is, to Christ, who appeared as an Angel often to the Patriarchs before his Incarnation, and is called the Angel of Gods presence, *Isai.* lxiii. 9. But the created Angels would not suffer St. John so much as to bow down to them, *Revel.* xix. 10. and Chap. xxii. 8. saying, that was a piece of worship due to God: Yea the pretended humility of going not directly to God, but by the Mediation of Angels, is called a deceit and plainly forbid by the Apostle, *Coloss.* ii. 18. And Christ hath Taught us to pray to his Father, if we want the assistance of his Angels, *Math.* xxvi. 53.

Po. Doth not your Bible tell you the Souls of the Martyrs under the Altar

pray for us? Revel. vi. 9, 10. **And may we not then desire them to pray to God for us?**

Prot. Those Spirits only pray in general for the speedy coming of the Day of Judgment, and are bid to rest in quiet till then, Ver. 11. But this is no ground for particular Men in distant places to ask particular things of them, as Health, Wealth, Peace, Protection; Yea Pardon, Grace and Glory, which none but God can give; Nor doth the Scripture anywhere declare we should ask these things of any other but God.

Po. How dare you that are a Sinner whom God will not hear, John. ix. 31. presume to ask these things directly of God himself, without desiring his friends to pray for you?

Prot. Though I am unworthy, yet I am commanded to pray, and to ask all that I need in Christs Name, and am promised if I do so, I shall be heard, John. xiv. 13, 14. And Chap. xvi. 23, 24. Yea I am told he is my Advocate, i John. ii. 2. And that there is but one Mediator between God and Man, i Tim. ii. 5. Now after all this, I think it is a greater presumption, without any command, direction or promise, to make use of the Saints as our Advocates and Mediators; for it is to leave the way prescribed by God, and invent a new one of our own; it is to take that Honour which belongs to the Son of God, and give it to his Servants, so that we may well

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well believe it will disoblige him we pray to.

Po. You do not consider that we hold, the Saints joyn their intercession to that of Christ, and therefore to desire them to pray for us, can be no injury to Christ, whom we deny not to be our Mediator.

Prot. It must suppose Christs Intercession not to be sufficient, to add so many other Mediators to him; Yea it seems you believe they have more power with God, or love for us, than Christ hath; otherwise you would not think it necessary to joyn their Prayers to his, nor make more addresses to these Servants than to the Son. We know as Christ is God, he is most able, and as Man, most willing to help us, *Hebr. ii. 18.* and are assured he is able to serve to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, *Hebr. vii. 25.* And when the Father hath provided so All-sufficient a Mediator, to fly to others and desire them to add their interest to his, is both ingratitude to the Father, and a disparagement to the Son, when you have laid all the fine colours on it you can.

Po. I will convince you by a practice of your own, that herein you censure us unjustly; Do not you desire the Saints on Earth to pray for you, though Christ be your Mediator, and is this any injury to Christ? Why then may we not as well desire those in Heaven to do it?

Prot. We have many Precepts and Examples in Scripture to desire holy Men on Earth

to pray with us and for us, which shews that is according to Gods Will, *I Job.* v. 14. but you have not one word to direct you, to desire this of the Saints in Heaven. Besides, we do not kneel to good Men, and put their Names into the same Litanies and Prayers with God Almighty, nor desire to be heard by their Merits: They pray with us and for us, as our Fellow-sufferers, who see and hear our wants in particular, and pray only in Christ's Name, and through his Merits, and so are joyned Petitioners with us, not joyned Mediators with Christ. And withal, every particular Man goes to them and tells them his case, and then he is sure they know his wants; but Scripture is very clear, that those who are dead, even the best Men, know not the particular wants of their dearest Friends, *2 Kings xxii. 20. Job xiv. 2. Eccles. ix. 5. Isa. lxiii. 16.* Nor is it possible for any Creature to hear the Petitions of many thousands at one time in divers places; and if they cannot hear you, what are you better for praying to them?

Po. This is easily answered; for since God knows all things, and they are with him always, cannot he without any difficulty make our Prayers known to them?

Prot. We question not Gods power, but why should he do this since you pray to them without his direction, and by doing so accuse the way which he prescribed of being insuf-

insufficient, nor have you any Promise that God will acquaint them with your Prayers. Besides, you cannot but think it absurd, if not ridiculous, to pray to the Saints to pray to God for you, and yet till God tell them first, they cannot tell him what it is they are to desire of him ; this is to employ God to inform the Saints of our wants, and looks like writing to a Courtier which cannot read, to desire him to beg a Favour of the King for us, because we were unworthy to write immediately to the King, and yet knew before hand this Courtier must go to the King himself to read the Letter.

Po. We value not your idle Comparisons, Our Church tells us the Saints do hear us, and it is no matter whether or no we know how they do hear us.

Prot. The Scripture tells you they do not hear you, and Reason tells you they cannot, and will you believe your Church against both ? Your Church never durst define the way how they come to hear you, because many Absurdities follow upon all methods that ever yet were devised : And a wary man would scarce credit a thing of this consequence that cannot be proved or made out ; much less would he go to Mediators , of whose hearing him he can have no other assurance than the bare word of those Men who gain by the Doctrine, when he hath an All-sufficient Mediator, who he is sure can

always hear and help him, and to whom he may pray without any doubts to damp his Devotion.

Po. Did not the Virgin Mary prophesy, that all Generations should call her blessed, Luke i. 48. and have we not reason to believe that the Mother of God hath great power in Heaven?

Prct. We call her *Blessed*, and bless God for her; but she never said, All Generations should pray to her, or impertinently repeat that Salutation, which was proper to the occasion of her Conception of Christ, as if it were a formal Prayer to her now: Nor is there one word in Scripture to direct us to pray to her at all; much less to say more *Ave's* to her, than *Pater nosters* to God, and to make larger Offerings to her than to Jesus, who declares he hath all Power in Heaven and Earth; so that all your worship of her is an Invention of your own, and meer Superstition.

Po. We find it makes the People moze devout, to propose so many glorified Saints to them to be adozed, than if we confined them to adoze only one invisible God.

Prct. You may observe, if you would own the Truth, that this impious Device makes the Worship of God to be neglected, inclining your People to rely more on the Saints help than on Gods, and to give them the honour

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honour due to him for those Blessings which he alone bestows on them; and since God hath confined us *only to worship and serve him*, *Math. iv. 10.* it is Superstition and Idolatry, not Devotion, for to make any other Beings the Objects of your Worship.

Po. Well, but since God hath wrought so many Miracles by the Relicks of the Saints, doubtless he is well pleased with our adoring them and their Relicks.

Prot. There have been many false Relicks proposed for true ones, and many forged Miracles invented by cunning Priests for gain, as hath been undeniably proved; and if there be any true Relicks of real Saints, and any certain Miracles, it is not the Saint or his Relicks, but God (by whose power the Miracle was wrought, as S. Peter tells us, *Acts iii.12.*) who is to have the glory: And though we find in Scripture that Miracles were wrought by Moses Rod, Elijahs Mantle, the Hem of Christs Garment, S. Peters Shadow, and S.Pauls Handkerchief, we never read that any of the Faithful adored these things.

Po. Perhaps you have been told, we wholly neglect making Prayers to God by Christ Jesus, whereas we have many Prayers in our Publick Offices like yours, directed to God in Christs Name, and I hope you have no Objection against these,

Prot. You ought to have no other Prayers but such ; and yet though these Prayers be right as to their Matter, there is one intollerable Fault in them all, that they are made in *Latin*, which the People do not understand.

Po. Is not the Church to direct in what manner Publick Prayers shall be made, and are we not to obey her Orders ?

Prot. No doubtless, not where your Church expressly contradicts God and his holy Apostle. The Spirit of God by S. *Paul* commands Men to pray with understanding, and forbids any to use an unknown Tongue in Christian Assemblies, enjoyning the Priest so to make his Prayers and Praises that the most unlearned may joyn in them, be edified by them, and say *Amen* to them, I *Cor.* xiv. 14, 15, 16, 17, and 26. and your Church bids men pray without understanding, and prescribes an unknown Tongue for the Priest to Pray and Praise God in, wherein the People cannot joyn, and whereby they are not edified, yea, to which they cannot with understanding say *Amen*: In such a case to obey the Church is to disobey God, and a great Impiety.

Po. You must know Latin was the Language of the ancient Christians at Rome, and we have not altered our Prayers, but only kept them in that Tongue in which they were made at first by the Apostles, who planted our Church,

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Prot. Now you have yielded the Cause, for if the Apostles, who were Jews, did not set up the *Hebrew* Prayers at *Rome*, but *Latin*, because that was the Language which the People then understood ; if you were of their Spirit, or followed their steps, you ought now to turn them into other Languages, because the People do not understand *Latin*, and because it is necessary they should pray with understanding. Is this your Apostolical Church which acts contrary to the Writings and Example of the Apostles, or could the Apostles leave you any Tradition to contradict their own Commands and Practice ?

Po. May not the People think of God and good things, and so be very devout at these Prayers, though they do not understand the words ?

Prot. They may think of God and good things at home, and so need not come to the Publick Service at all, if this be sufficient : We think Publick Prayers were designed for the People to come and unite their particular and hearty desires to the Petitions made by the Priest; and this praying with one accord, *Acts* i. 14. makes them more prevalent than private Prayer, *S. Math.* xviii. 20. But your People are thinking of one thing when the Priest is saying another, and cannot desire the particular things asked by the Priest, because they do not know them : So that this turns the publick Prayers into private, and the Priest might

might as well pray without a Congregation.

Po. It is to God we speak in Prayer, and since he understands us, it is no matter whether the People understand them or no.

Prot. By this Argument you need not Pray at all, because God knows your necessities before you ask: Yet he bids us ask, that by the words of our Prayers we may stir up our Desires, exercise our Devotion, and excite our Faith, not that we may instruct him. Wherefore your People are robbed of all that comfort and benefit which ours find so sensibly in our *English* Prayers; merely, because your Church scorns to reform any thing; and you can never expect that those who by Experience have found the sweetnes and advantage of our pious and plain Liturgy, will endure your dry, unprofitable *Latin* Prayers.

Po. Well, but some of your People think Sermons the main thing in Publick Worship, and we hope to gain them however because we Preach in English.

Prot. Possibly some of these may be catcht by this Bait; but all wise Protestants will ask you, why there is not as much reason for the People to know what they are to speak to God, as what the Priest is to speak to them; and will also desire to know, why you should read the Psalms and Lessons, and other parts of Scripture in *Latin*, which God writ for our Leaning and Instruction, I Cor. x. ii. and

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so make it as impossible the People should
learn any thing from it, or be instructed by it,
as for Boys in Horn-Books to be made any
wiser by reading a *Latin* Author to them.

Po. I have told you before, This is lest
the People should wrest the Scriptures, if
they were in a Language they understood.

Prot. Why then do you preach in *English*?
May they not wrest your Sermons, as well as
Holy Scripture? Is there more danger now
than in the Apostles times? Or is your
Church wiser than they? Did not they write
it in a Language generally understood? And
was it not soon after turned into *Latin*, be
cause the *Romans* best understood that Lan
guage? Did they not deliver it to all, and
command all to read it and search it, to me
ditate on it and teach it to their Children?
Though some are Gluttons and Drunkards,
we must not deny all Men the use of Meat
and Drink; nor would you thus keep the
Scriptures from the People, but only for fear
that such plain Men as I should discover
your Corruptions.

Po. Methinks you should discover your
own Corruptions there: For what is more
plainly expressed in Scripture than these
words concerning the Sacrament of the
Altar, This is my Body, Luke xxii. 19. and yet
you will not own the real Flesh of Christ
to be there; Is not this to deny Christ's
words, and disbelieve the Scripture?

Prot.

Prot. We may as well charge you with denying Christs words, and disbelieving Scripture, since you affirm his real Blood to be there, though he tells us, *This Cup is the new Testament in my Blood, Luk.xxii.20.1 Cor.xi.25.* You must confess there is a Figure in this Expression, or else you must affirm the Wine is Transubstantiated into the New Testament; and if there be a Figure in one Verse, why may there not be one also in the other, in regard this substantial Change which you pretend, is either in both parts, or in neither?

Po. However we have much the advantage of you, because we take the Literal sense, which is both the more common and the more easie sense, whilſt you are forced to fly to Tropes and Figures.

Prot. You must consider this Sacrament is a Mystery, and in discoursing of Mysteries, it is more common in Scripture to speak Figuratively than Literally; yea, what is more usual there, than to call the Sign by the name of the thing signified, and the thing signified by the name of the Sign? So the *Rock* is said to be *Christ*, *1 Cor. x. 4.* and *Christ* is said to be *Bread*, *John vi. 48.* yet none are so absurd to say, the *Rock* is substantially changed into *Christ*, or *Christ* into *Bread*: And when the Church is called, *The Body of Christ, Colos. i. 24.* your selves do not affirm that there is any change made of the Church into Christs Flesh and Blood, though there be more said

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of this than of the Sacramental Bread, viz.
*That we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh,
and of his Bones, Ephes.v.30.* So when Christ
is called a *Vine*, a *Door*, a *Way*, a *Branch*, &c. it
is very certain the Expressions are Figurative,
and there are a thousand places in the Holy
Bible which cannot be otherwise under-
stood.

Po. Well, but the Literal sense is not to
be left, unless where the words cannot be
taken otherwise than Figuratively, which
is not the case here.

Prest. Yes, that is the very case here; for the
Literal sense is impossible and full of Contra-
dictions, but the Figurative is natural, plain
and easie: For if we take these words Lite-
rally, Christ's Body was whole and sitting at
the Table, and broken into pieces on the
Table at the same time; it must be entire
now in Heaven, and yet all of it in ten thou-
sand different and distant places on the Earth.
We must believe the substance of Flesh hath
none of its proper Accidents, and that the
Accidents of Bread can subsist without their
proper substance: We must think that to be
real Flesh and Blood, which we see, smell, taste
and feel to be real Bread and Wine: We must
believe there is a Miracle, when all our Senses
which are witness to all other Miracles,
give Evidence there is no Miracle at all here.
In short, we must contradict our Reason, and
deny our Senses without any need, unless it
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be to uphold an unintelligible Literal sense, when the Figurative is far more plain.

Po. 'Tis strange how Prejudice may blind Men; surely you cannot be in earnest when you say, a Figurative Speech is plainer than a Speech without a Figure; This only shews how desperate your Cause is, which drives you to these Absurdities.

Prot. I will prove it is no Absurdity to maintain that in this case, the Figurative sense is easier: For that is the easiest sense of any words, which the Mind first apprehends when we hear them. For Example, if one point to an House and Land, and say, *This is my Estate*, there the plain sense is the Literal sense; But if one hold a Writing sealed in his Hand, and say, *This is my Estate*, the easiest and plainest sense then is, *This is that which conveys my Estate, and all the benefits of it to me*: So if Christ had pointed to himself sitting at Table, and said, *This is my Body*, the Apostles would, and we must have taken it Literally: but since he points to Bread, and saith, *This is my Body*; the first and most natural sense of the words is, *This is that which signifies my Body, and communicates all the benefits of my Incarnation and Passion to you*: and thus S.Paul expressly doth expound it when he saith, *it is the Communion of his Body and Blood*, 1 Cor. x. 16.

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Prot. We believe that Christ is here verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful, and really present as to all the effects and benefits of his Passion, but this presence though it be real, yet is spiritual and apprehended by Faith, not corporal and substantial, because then it must be discerned by sense.

Po. From one absurdity granted many will follow, and your absurd exposition forces you to hold this ridiculous assertion, That a Spiritual Presence is a real Presence.

Prot. Dare you seriously deny this, which you call a ridiculous assertion ? Is not Christ really with his Church to the end of the World by his Spiritual Presence ? Is not the Holy Ghost really with every Regenerate Man by his Spiritual Presence ? The effects and benefits of Christ Death, which we seek in this Sacrament are Spiritual; such as Pardon, Peace, Grace and hopes of Glory, yet they are very real, and therefore we think it fittest to expect them in a Spiritual manner, especially since our Lord hath told us, *It is the Spirit that quickneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing*, John. vi. 63. And the Apostle saith, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. That is, it makes things invisible and Spiritual to be very real to the true Believer.

Po.

Po. I find you delight much in calling this Spiritual Meat and Drink, but would gladly understand how you dare do so, without any Authority of Scripture, yea when the Scripture saith, Christ will give us his flesh to eat, John. vi. 53.

Prot. We have good Authority of Scripture for this, viz: 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Where it is said that the Israelites had the priviledge by certain signs to Eat and Drink into Christ as well as we, in a mystical way: For they did all Eat of the same Spiritual Meat, and did all Drink of the same Spiritual Drink: For they Drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ: We see it was Spiritual Meat and Drink which they had, yet it was the same with ours, and therefore ours must be Spiritual Meat and Drink too. Again we are not said, All to Drink into one Blood; but into one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Nor can we understand how St. Paul could call that which is the Communion of Christs Body, by the Name of Bread after Consecration, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. If the outward part did not remain unchanged in substance, though its use be changed, and our Souls are certainly feed here, yet these are not capable of feeding either on Bread or Flesh; Yea our Lord himself teaches us to Expound those Words in St. John of a Spiritual Communication, of his Body, for he saith, The words he speaks to us are Spirit and Life, John. vi. 63.

Po.

Po. You do but prevaricate when you pretend to believe Christ is really present in the Sacrament, for if you truly believed this, you would give Divine Worship to the Host as we do.

Prot. We bend our Knees, address our Prayers and give Divine Worship to Christ, who is really present to our Faith in this Sacrament : But since we are sure that the outward part is not changed in nature, but only in use and signification and doth still remain Bread, we dare not give Divine Worship to that which is a Creature, since it would be Idolatry so to do.

Po. Well, I will inform you of one very ill consequence of your denying Christ's Flesh and Blood, to be substantially in this Sacrament, that is, you make it to be only a Commemoration of the Sacrifice on the Cross; but we give it far more honour, believing it to be a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the sins of quick and dead.

Prot. Neither you nor we ought to make the Sacrament what we please, we must take our Notions of it from Scripture and from Christ, who instituted it, and he bids us, *Do this in Remembrance of Him, Luk. xxii. 19.* And S. Paul doth not say *it is the Lords Death,* but *the shewing forth of his Death,* *I Cor. xi. 26.* Yea he makes this the main difference between the legal Sacrifices and that of Christ on the Cross, that they were often Offered,

but he was only to be Offered once, and by that one Offering hath perfectly satisfied for the Sins of the whole World, *Hebr. ix. 25, 26.* And Chap. x. 14. So that this Sacrament is certainly a Commemoration, as we say, but it cannot be a Sacrificing of Christ again, as you say, if we refer the matter (as we ought) to be judged by Scripture; wherein there is nothing to shew that is a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the Living, much less for the Sins of the Dead, whose estate can never be altered after this Life, *Luk. xvi. 26, 28.* But as they fall they must lye for ever, *Eccles. xi. 3.*

Po. The World may now see how unjustly you brag of your Magnifying the Merit of Christs Passion, and how falsly you accuse us of diminishing and disparaging it, Since we hold it sufficient to pardon both Quick and Dead, and you deny it can do any good to the Dead.

Prot. It is not for want of Merit in Christs Passion, but for want of Capacity in those who have not Repented in their Life Time, that hinders these Deceased Persons from receiving the benefits of Christs Death; Christ hath declared he will pardon none but them that do repent; and if Men do not repent before they die, they cannot repent afterwards, and so cannot receive any benefit of Christs Passion; and if living Men be taught, they may get a Pardon after Death,

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it will encourage them to put off their Repentance to the very last: Nor would so false a Doctrin without any ground in Scripture ever have been taught in your Church, but only that the crafty Inventors of it found, it would make Masses sell at dear Rates.

Po. You are very free of your Censures, but we despise them, being assured our Doctrins and Practices are the true sense of Scripture, as it is interpreted to us by the Holy Catholic Church.

Prot. Do you really think so? Pray then before we leave this Subject, will you tell me, How the making only some (that is the Priests) to Drink of the Cup, can possibly be the true meaning of Christs Words, *Drink ye all of this, Math. xxvi. 27.*

Po. Why, it is plain the Apostles were Priests and not Lay Men, and it was only to the Apostles that Christ spake these Words; and though we forbid the People to Drink of this Cup, yet we Command the Priests to do it.

Prot. Was it not also only to the Apostles that Christ said then, *Take Eat, this my Body, Ver. 26.* and will it not follow by your way of arguing, that none but Priests must Eat of the Bread, and that the People must receive neither Bread nor Wine: You know the Apostles stood then in the place of Lay-Men and represented the Congregation as Christ did the Priest, so that S. Paul plainly applies

to the People, the Commands both of Eating and Drinking, which Christ gave at first only to his Apostles. And nothing is more evident than that all the People at *Corinth* did Drink of the Cup, and some of them too largely, *1 Cor.* x. 21. Chap. xi. 21. and *Ver.* 27, 28, 29. Chap. xii. 13. So that I wonder how you dare call the contradicting Christs Commands and the Precepts and Practice of the Apostles, the true sense of Scripture, and why you rob the People of one half of the Sacrament.

Po. We rob them of nothing, because we declare we give them whole Christ, which is contained fully under either species.

Pret. This is no more than if one who clipt off half the Kings Coin should say it was still current Money : The very declaration it self supposes that our Lord instituted two species when one was sufficient, and so to excuse your selves of impiety you accuse him of doing things in vain : And since Christ is here set out as having suffered for Sin, and so his Blood separated from his Body, we cannot imagin how the Bread alone should be sufficient to set forth this Mystery.

Po. There is danger lest we should spill the Cup in giving it to the People, and lest it should be profaned by the rude mouths of Lay-men.

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Prot. This danger may be in giving it to the Priests ; however you are not of S. Pauls mind, who when the Cup was abused at *Corinth* even to excess, durst not alter Christs Institution , nor take it wholly away as you do, thereby committing a grievous Sacrilege in keeping back part of that whereof God hath made you dispensers, and as much as in you lyes, depriving the People of the benefit of Christs Blood.

Po. We can find moze fault with your preparation for it, than you with our dispensing of it ; for why do not you all go to a Priest to confess your sins before you do receive, as the Scripture doth appoint ?

Prot. The Scripture appoints every Man shall examine himself before he Eat of that Bread and Drink of that Cup, I Cor. xi. 28. Now of this you say very little , but our Church strictly enjoyns all thus to prepare : But Scripture no where appoints it as necessary for all, to go to a Priest and confess before every act of receiving.

Po. Doth not Scripture declare that penitent Sinners confessed their Sins to a Priest, Math. iii. 6. Acts. xix. 8. And command us to confess our faults one to another, James. v. 16. and can there be any fitter time to do this than just before we Communicate?

Prot. We do not forbid Men at any time to Confess to a Priest, but advise them to it, in case of a troubled Mind, or a violent Temptation, and especially if that be their condition who are to receive the Sacrament: But we dare not lay such a Snare on our People, as to makethis always necessary, since God hath not declared it is so. And those Examples you bring, concern Publick Confession of Sins before the Priest and the Congregation; and so doth that place in S. James, for it orders us to Confess not to the Righteous Man alone, but one to another, that so the Righteous Man and all the rest may pray for Mercy for the Penitent; and I have heard this was the Primitive way of Confessing Sins, and is still here in our Church, where the Offences are scandalous, and the Party censured: But this is no ground for your Private Confessing into the Priests Ear, and so getting an Absolution of course at Set times.

Po. Hath not Christ granted to the Priests a power to remit mens sins, or retain them, John xx.23. and must not the Judge who is to condemn or set free, of necessity hear all the particulars concerning the Criminal?

Prot. Our Priests will not grant us Absolution in particular Cases, unless we do so far confess the Crimes we are guilty of, as to shew our selves truly penitent; but they do

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not compel us under pain of Damnation to come and tell them all our Sins, which Scripture saith is impossible, *Psal. xix. 12.* Nor doth the Kings granting a Commission to certain Judges, to hear and to determine Causes, oblige those who can make up their differences among themselves, to come and be tried before them. Besides, the Priest is not the highest and last Judge, nor can he infallibly tell when he doth hear all that Men say of themselves, whether they be Hypocrites, or true Penitents; and therefore we are advised to confess all our Sins daily to God the Supreme Judge, and to labour to prove our Repentance to be sincere to him by amending our lives: And we are not obliged to go to a Priest, but in weighty Cases, and on great Occasions.

Po. This is one great Complaint we have against your pretended Reformation, that you do not oblige Sinners to make any satisfaction for their Offences, and have laid aside the Sacrament of Penance.

Prot. We do account it necessary for notorious and scandalous Offenders to do a publick Pennance, that their Shame and Sorrow may be as evident as their Crimes, and this they are to do for Satisfaction to the Church, *2 Cor. ii. 7.* And we hold it necessary in more secret Sins, that the Sinner do heartily bewail them, humbly confess them to God, and

utterly forsake them for the time to come ; and upon these terms we doubt not God will forgive them for Christs sake , according to his Promises in Holy Scripture, *Prov.xxviii.13.* *Ezek.xviii.21.* and we will trust Gods Word sooner than yours.

Po But after God hath pardoned the Sinner as to the eternal Punishment due to him, which Christ bought off, He must satisfie the Divine Justice for temporal Pains still remaining due to those Sins, by submitting to the Penances laid on him by his Priest.

Prot. This is a meer Device of your own, not grounded on Holy Scripture ; for there it is declared, that Christ hath delivered us from all the Curse due to us, and saved us to the uttermost, and cleansed us from all Sin, and made our Peace ; so that if we have Interest in him there is no Condemnation to us. 'Tis true, God may and doth sometimes Chastise good Men, after he resolves to pardon them, *2 Sam. xii. 14.* which is not to satisfie his Justice , but to warn them not easily to run into the like Offences, *Heb.xii.6.* And true Penitents have voluntarily put on Sackcloth and laid in Ashes, and Fasted and Prayed, &c. But this was to shew the sincerity of their Repentance, and the reality of their Sorrow for offending God , or to make themselves more fit to pray earnestly for the averting the Divine Displeasure: But Gods Word

Word never makes these Acts any part of Satisfaction to God, nor do we find one Precedent of Christ, or his Holy Apostles, enjoining such Acts purely to satisfie Gods Justice for any remaining Punishment.

Po. Well, you cannot deny it is more for the honour of Gods Justice to enjourn the Offenders to make him some satisfaction, rather than to teach them he will freely forgive; and you must grant it is more likely to restrain men from future Crimes, if they suffer in Body or Goods for those that are past.

Prot. But it is not much for Gods Honour, that when your Church pretends God will not remit these remaining temporal Pains without men do their Pennance; yet she will remit the Pennance it self for a certain Price, and so Money will buy off that which you say Christs Death doth not satisfie for: And indeed, none but the Poor almost do any Pennance with you, the Rich who can gratifie the Priest well are Absolved and Indulged; and however you order it in your Church, there are as many notorious and customary Sinners for all these Pennances and Payments, as any where else: yea, they sin with less fear and regret than others, because they foresee a Pilgrimage, or a little Fasting; a few Lashes, or a Sum of Money will make their Peace with the Priest, and so they take little Care by a sincere Amend-

Amendment to make their Peace with God.

Po. I suppose you reflect upon our Indulgences, which are no other than the use of that Power of remitting Sins which Christ gave to S.Peter, and in him to the Chief Pastor of the Catholic Church; and doubtless it is a most comfortable thing when S.Peters Successor, or his Delegates, do so solemnly declare us clear from those Sins we have confessed.

Prot. S. Peter never sold this Power, *Acts* viii. 18. for he affirms, *We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold,* *1 Pet. i. 8.* Had he used the same gainful Trade which the Pope drives, he could not have said, *Silver and Gold have I none,* *Acts* iii. 6. So that you must not mention that holy Apostle as your Patron till you follow his Example, and grant Pardons to none but them, that upon a strict search are found truly Penitent; and upon these terms (which Christ makes necessary) the Poor must have them as soon as the Rich, and both freely: But while your Church makes a meer Merchandise of them, and grants them out to raise Money to enrich a Nephew, to marry a Niece of the Popes, or to aggrandize a Favourite, and sends them into remote Countries to Men and Women whose Faces he never saw, and of whose Penitence he hath no assurance, we Protestants must look

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Po. You are quite mistaken ; the Church designs nothing by these Indulgences but the Penitents Salvation ; the Money is a voluntary Offering, and can you blame Holy Church for receiving the Oblations of the People ?

Pret. It is no Crime to receive voluntary Oblations, provided they be dispensed to the Poor : But here is a certain Price set, and the Money received goes in part to the Popes Coffers, and in part to the wealthy Delegates, or to rich Monasteries ; and it appears that Money is the main thing , because Poor Men cannot get them , nor will they give an Indulgence freely to the Indigent , though never so penitent ; whereas the Rich, that shew little signs of true Repentance, may have them , and are thereby hardened in their Sins. Nor is it this Point alone, but most of those disputed between us and you, that are stiffly defended on your part, because they advance the Wealth and Power of your Church ; Such is the Popes power to receive Appeals, Images, Relicks, Saying Masses to deliver Souls , Confession, Pennances, and two more not yet mentioned, viz. Purgatory, and the pretended Sanctity of your Religious Orders.

Po. 'Tis not the Advantage we have by these Doctrines, but the certain Truth of them, which makes us so desirous you should believe them, as appears in this Article of Purgatory, which I shall prove first by Scripture, and then by Reason to be a great Truth.

Prot. The Scripture declares very often and very plainly, that there are two places of eternal Rewards and Punishments, *Heaven* and *Hell*; and if there be any Third place to which most Men are to go, to suffer very great temporary Pains, I doubt not but God hath revealed it as plainly and clearly as he hath done Heaven and Hell, and therefore let me see you prove it by plain Texts of Holy Scripture.

Po. Our Saviour saith, The Sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come, *Math. xii. 32.* which plainly supposes some Sins not pardoned here may be forgiven there; and that is one ground of Purgatory.

Prot. This is far from a clear Proof, for here is no mention of *Purgatory*; and this Phrase, *The World to come*, in the Gospel, often signifies the Days of the *Messiah*, *Heb xi. 5.* and *vi. 5.* And the *Jews* expected that *Messiah* (whom they believed as yet not come) should pardon divers great Sins, which could not be expiated by Legal Sacrifices; and there-

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therefore Christ speaking to them in their own Phrase, tells them, This Sin against the *Holy Ghost* should never be pardoned under the Law, nor under the Gospel. But suppose this Phrase do signify, *The next World*: Christ says not any other Sins shall be forgiven then, but only that this Sin shall never be forgiven there nor here, which is only a Phrase to set out it shall not be forgiven at all: So Gen. xxxi. 24. to speak *neither good nor bad*; signifies, to say nothing at all.

Po. *Doth not S.Paul say*, Every Mans work shall be made manifest, for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by Fire, and the Fire shall try every Mans work of what sort it is: *And a little after*, If a Mans work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15. *Is not this a clear Proof of Purgatory fire?*

Prot. This place speaks only of Teachers, and the Persons are not to be burnt, but their Works, that is, the False Doctrines which any of them teach; and the whole place is Metaphorical and obscure; and that last Phrase of *being saved, but so as by Fire*, is no more but a way of expressing a thing that shall be done with great difficulty, Psal. lxvi. 12. Zech. iii. 2. So that you may as well pretend Sinners are in Purgatory here, because we are commanded, *to save them with fear, pulling*

pulling them out of the Fire, Jude, ver. 23. And if this place be to be understood Literally, it must be referred to that Fire which shall burn all the World at the Day of Judgment, which (I have been told) is that which the Fathers understand by the *Day* and the *Fire* here mentioned , and so it hath no relation to Purgatory , which you must either prove (as we do Heaven and Hell) from clearer places than this, or we shall not believe it.

Po. We have S. Peter also on our side, who tells us, That Christ went by the Spirit to Preach to the Spirits in Prison , which sometimes were disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah , while the Ark was preparing , wherein few , that is , eight Persons were saved by Water, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.

Prot. This place is obscurer than any of the former , and so very unfit to build an Article of Faith upon : But the plainest Sense of it is, That Christ by his Spirit in Noah did Preach to those Wicked ones before the Flood, whose Souls and Spirits were as it were Imprisoned in their Bodies ; and those who were saved by this Preaching were but a few , and those were saved by Water, and not by Fire. And as far as we can gather from this Text, and 2 Pet. ii. 3, 5. these Persons who were Preached to , remained

mained disobedient, and were not saved at all; so that you have no shadow of ground to fix Purgatory on this place.

Po. What think you of that Prison into which if we be cast by God, who is the Sinners Adversary, they shall by no means come out thence till they have paid the uttermost Farthing, *Math. v. 26.* Is not this Purgatory?

Prot. I think it is nothing to your purpose, for Christ useth it as an Argument why we should Repent and make our Peace with God while we live; whereas Purgatory gives Men pretences to put off their Repentance till Death, and fills them with false Hopes to be delivered afterwards: And out of this Prison there is no means to be delivered, but by the Persons own satisfying the whole Debt, whereas you think the Prayers and Alms of others may get Men out of Purgatory: Nor doth the Text say, that the Sufferer can pay the utmost Farthing, but rather suppose it impossible, and so his lying there till he pay the utmost Farthing, must be meant of his lying in Hell for ever. And Christ mentions Hell in that Chapter, *Ver. 22, 29, 30.* But there is no word of Purgatory here, or any where in Scripture, and therefore pray try if you can prove it from Reason, since Gods Word is not for you,

Po. Is there not great difference between some sins and others; and if God be a Righteous Judge, he will make different punishments, so that it is very reasonable to believe that Venial Sins shall only be punished with temporary fire, not with eternal flames.

Prot. If we consider the Holiness of the Law, or the infiniteness of the Majesty offended, all Sin, even the least, deserves Damnation as its just Wages, *Rom. vi. 23.* and the least Sin unrepented of may prove Mortal, because it is not so much (now under the Gospel) the Sin, as the final impenitence which Damns Men; and he that will not repent, shews he would Eternally Sin; so that whatever the instance be, he deserves Eternal Damnation: Yet alas! no Man that repents not fully while he lives, is only guilty of these lesser Sins, which in such persons never go alone, they are always guilty of greater Sins which merit Eternal Flames. And that place of *S. John* on which you ground your distinction of Mortal and Venial Sin, speaks of the event of Mens Sins, not of the nature of them; So that if we see Men sin without any signs or hope of their Repentance, he doth not oblige us to pray for such, *i. John. v. 16.*

Po. But is it not said, that nothing which is unclean shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? *Rev. xxi. 27.* Wherefore reason teacheth, that they who are Despised with

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Prot. Surely poor Catholics are hardly used, to pay so much Money, and endure so many Pennances, on pretence of purging away their Venial Sins; and yet after all their Fastings, Whipping, and Pilgrimages, their Absolutions, Holy Water, Alms and Extreme Unction, still they are to endure a Torment as grievous, though not as long, as Hell Fire, for these light Transgressions: Besides, we cannot imagine how Fire can purge a Soul unbodyed, nor why Purgatory should be needful to cleanse us from some Sins, when Scripture declares, *the Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all Sin*, 1 John. i. 7. Or how Men who are to be Saved by Christ should be condemned to Purgatory, when St. Paul saith, *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. 'Tis evident, it hugely derogates from Gods Mercy and Christs Merits, to teach Men, That after all Gods Promises to justify us freely by his Grace, Rom. iii. 24. And after Christs blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, Coloss. ii. 14. they must still smart so long and so severely, and are left to pay so great a part of it themselves.

Po. You are mistaken again, for we hold, that because of the Communion of Saints, one man may satisfy for another, and that the King and Peoples of the Living, and

especially of Holy Frpers and Nuns, will avail, for the delivering the Dead out of Purgatory.

Prot. You may hold what you please, but Scripture tells us, *Every one shall bear his own burden*, Galat. vi. 5. and, *that no Man can redeem his Brother, nor make agreement to God for him, because it cost more to redeem their Souls, so that he must let that alone for ever*, Psal. xlix. 7, 8. And that all the good Works of the best Men are little enough for themselves, *Math. xxv. 9.* So that we wonder the wiser Lay-men will be deluded by a Doctrin which is so ill proved, and tends so Apparently to make the People put off their Repentance till their Death, and to give the Monks an opportunity to draw Legacies from the dying, and large Gifts from their living Friends, that is, to make the Laity Wicked, and the Clergy Rich, and to hazard the Salvation of both.

Po. We do not think the Money ill bestowed which we give to our Priests and Frpers, whose Prayers are more pure and prevalent than those of your Clergy, because they are under those three Holy Vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience.

Frst. Vows without observing them are but a snare and an aggravation of the Sin, when they are broken, as two of these most notoriously are by your Priests and Religious Orders, who are infamous in all Countries for those Artifices they use to get Wealth, and for their

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their unnatural and scandalous Lust; and your Church is justly taxed with all the infamous Consequences of the Vow of Chastity, because she imposes it on young Persons before they know their own strength, and connives at Fornication in them rather than she will allow them to Marry, that the Church may be their Heir, and that they may have less dependence on Kings and States, as being single Persons.

Po. You would fain make this a piece of Policy, whereas it is Religion, for S. Paul declares, single persons are fittest to wait upon the Lord without distraction, 1 Cor. vii. 35. and on that account it is most proper for the Religious and Priests.

Prot. The Apostle advises all Christians (and not Priests only) to continue single if they were so, as best for those Times of Persecution, and provided they found they could live Chastly Unmarried, otherwise to avoid Fornication he Commands them even then to Marry, 1 Cor. vii. 2. Whereas you forbid it to all your Religious in all Times and all Cases: Besides, he laid no Vow upon them Ver. 35. Nor was he himself under any Vow, but was free to Marry if he had pleased, 1 Cor. ix. 5. And he allows a Bishop to be the Husband of one Wife, 1 Tim. iii. 2. and supposes Deacons then had Wives, Ver. 11. Nor doth he count Marriage impurity in any, but affirms, *It is honourable in all, and the Bed*

Undefiled, Hebr. xiii. 4. he excepts not the Clergy, so that we doubt not our Married Clergy's Prayers who live soberly according to Gods Ordinance are more pure and prevalent than yours, most of which live in Perjury, burning Desires and Fornication.

Po But your Priests have not power by their Prayers to cast out Evil Spirits, as ours have; which shews, that Ours, not Yours, are the true Successors of the Apostles, to whom Christ gave power over Unclean Spirits, Mark xvi. 17.

Prot. Christ gave his Apostles power then to drink Poyson, and take up Serpents without harm, as also afterwards to Speak with Tongues, Heal the Sick by a Touch, and Raise the Dead; yet your Priests dare not pretend to any of these Miracles, which are all ceased long since, 1 Cor. xii. 8. Only they keep up the Pretence to Cast out Evil Spirits, because that is more easily counterfeited than any of the rest: And if this alone would serve, 'tis likely Conjurers might prove themselves the Apostles Successors, as well as your Priests; for they can Cast out Evil Spirits better than the Romish Priests, who as may be noted, do Cast out the Devil as often out of the same Party in divers places, as there is occasion, to make a Proselyte, or work upon the Superstitious. Now this must be done either by Compact with

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with the Devil, or the Party pretended to be Possessed, and either way it is little to their Honour. Besides, I have known a good Physician, by Natural Means, Cure those whom these Priests pretended were Possessed, which shews they often cast the Devil out when he was never in.

Po. Well, I cannot but pity your Obstinacy, and pray for you, who wilfully shut your Eyes against the plainest Arguments for Catholic Truth.

Prot. There is more Reason for me to pity and pray for you, who in all these Points do contradict Holy Scripture, which cannot deceive us, and believe false and feigned Traditions, invented by designing Men for Evil ends: and for my part, I count it a wise Resolution, and no Obstinacy, to give credit to God rather than Men.

Po. You flatter your self with Scripture taken in your own sense, but you did own the Catholic Church was the best Interpreter of Scripture; and I assure you the Holy Fathers, who in all Ages have delivered down to us the Sense of the Catholic Church, agree exactly with us in all these Opinions and Practices which you Protestants reject; and can you think all these holy Ancient Doctors were deceived, and that a few obscure Modern Reformers are in the right?

Prot. Truly, I have but little skill in these

these Writings of the Fathers ; but I have heard our Clergy (who are as well read in them as any of you) declare, That all these Fathers condemn your Opinions, as much as Holy Scripture doth, and that these Opinions and Practices were late Inventions of your Church, and were set up in Times of Ignorance and Superstition , mecrly to gain Power and Wealth by them : And though I am not able to make this out , I promise you, whenever you please, to bring one of our Churchmen that shall prove what I say. In the mean time , because the Scripture was before the Fathers , I am well satisfied that mine is the oldest and the best Religion, and am resolved therefore by Gods Grace never to forsake it; and if you lov'd your own Soul above your Worldly Interest, you would embrace it also; which I heartily pray you may, and so bid you Farewell.

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